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Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006: Labour Force Experience of People with Disabilities in Canada

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Symbols

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.	not available for any reference period
..	not available for a specific reference period
...	not applicable
0	true zero or a value rounded to zero
0^s	value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value was rounded
^{p}	preliminary
^{r}	revised
x	suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
^{E}	use with caution
F	too unreliable to be published

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Introduction

Participation in the labour market is an important part of life for Canadians seeking personal independence and long-term financial security. Participation in the labour market can be especially challenging for people with disabilities because they can face several additional barriers compared to persons without a disability. In addition to finding employment, a person with a disability may be limited in the amount or kind of work they can do; they may require workplace accommodations such as modified hours or duties or structural modifications; they may experience discrimination, or they may encounter any combination of these barriers.

This report uses information from the 2006 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) to explore the employment experiences of people with disabilities to gauge their success in the labour market in 2006. People without disabilities are utilised as a comparative group (for more information about the 2006 PALS please see text box 1). Following a 2006 employment profile of people with disabilities, this report provides analysis of changes in the labour market experiences of people with disabilities between 2001 and 2006. The final section of this report explores barriers to employment for people with disabilities including the disability itself as a barrier, workplace accommodations and perceived workplace discrimination.

Text box 1

The nationwide Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) is designed to collect information on adults and children with disabilities - i.e., whose everyday activities are restricted because of a health condition or other limitation. Funded by Human Resources and Social Development Canada and carried out by Statistics Canada, PALS provides essential information on the prevalence of different disabilities, the types of support available to people with disabilities, their employment profile, income and participation in social activities. This information is used by all levels of government, associations, researchers and non-governmental organizations in planning the services needed by people with activity limitations to enable them to participate fully in all spheres of life.

The latest data on people with disabilities were gathered in 2006, following a previous PALS conducted in 2001. The 2006 PALS provides a measure of variability in the number of people with disabilities and, where possible, changes in the labour force situation for people with disabilities over the previous five years. New questions were also added to reflect technological developments and new policy and program data requirements.

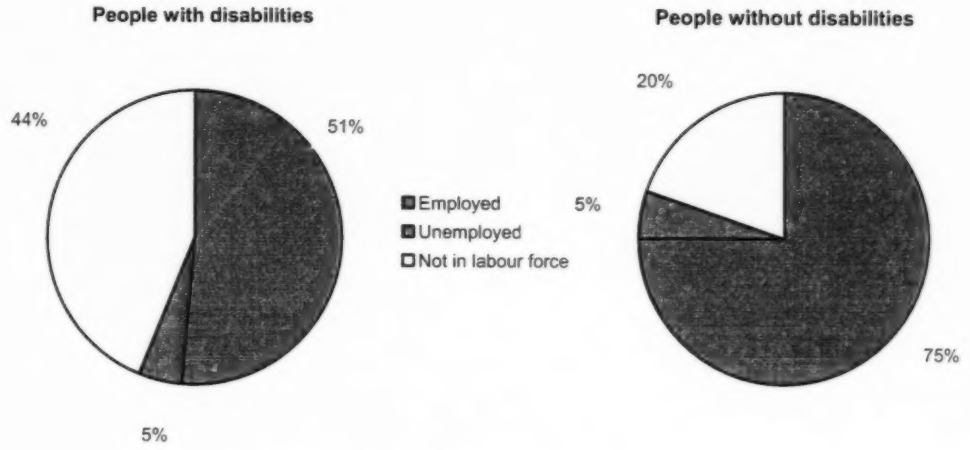
This article, the fifth in a series of releases on the PALS data, contains the survey results on the employment situation for adults 15 to 64 with disabilities. The main themes explored are changes in the labour market for people with and without disabilities between 2001 and 2006, barriers to employment for people with disabilities and perceived workplace discrimination.

Other analyses dealing with issues such as income and family impact will be released later in 2008.

Overview of the labour force for people with disabilities

In 2006, there were 2,457,350 people with activity limitations in Canada between the ages of 15 and 64 who potentially could have participated in the labour force. Of this group, 1,259,980 (51.3%) were employed, 119,340 (4.9%) were unemployed, and 1,078,020 (43.9%) were not in the labour force. Compared to the population without disabilities, there was a larger proportion of people with disabilities who were not in the labour force (see chart 1; for more information about the labour force variables used in this report see text box 2).

Chart 1
Labour force status for people with and without disabilities, Canada, 2006



Note: Includes the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut
Source: Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006*

Text box 2

This report uses the employment information that was provided to the Census in order to accurately measure the labour market experience of people with and without disabilities using the same labour market concepts and reference periods. The Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) data is used to determine the respondent's disability status.

The second half of this report provides more detailed information about the labour force experiences of persons with disabilities. This section uses the labour force status questions that were asked during the PALS interview as they provide more detailed information. Since the PALS interviews took place about six months after the Census, a small number of respondents changed their labour force status. The PALS labour force status indicator also provides a more detailed labour force status by separating people who have retired from those who are not in the labour force. This distinction is important for people with disabilities because it differentiates between people who have participated in the labour market and retired willingly versus people who have not or cannot participate in the labour market.

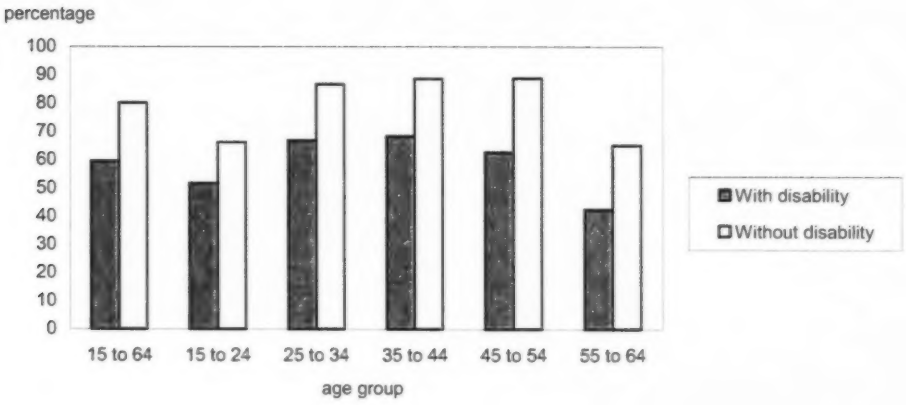
As chart 1 shows, the labour force activity of people with and without disabilities is substantially different. For people with disabilities, the proportions of the population who were not in the labour force versus employed were nearly equal compared to about three quarters (75.1%) of the non-disabled population that is employed and about one fifth (19.8%) that is not in the labour force. It should be noted that the age distributions of the populations with and without disabilities are also very different. For example, the median age of the working age (15 to 64) population with disabilities is 49.0 years compared to 39.0 years for the non-disabled population. For this reason, all unemployment, employment and labour force participation rates presented in this report for the population with disabilities have been age standardised to the age distribution of the non-disabled population (i.e. 2006 PALS to the 2006 non-disabled population, 2001 PALS to the 2001 non-disabled population; see text box 3 for more details).

Text box 3

When the characteristics of two separate populations are very different, age standardisation can be used to adjust the statistics for one population so that they are more comparable with statistics from the other population. In the example of people with and without disabilities, people with disabilities are older so their labour force characteristics will be different and make comparisons to the non-disabled population more difficult. By age standardising the population of people with disabilities to the age structure of the population of people without disabilities, the differences noted between the two groups reflect actual differences between the two groups and not the difference in their age structures. Thus, the 2001 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) data are standardised to the 2001 non-disabled population and the 2006 PALS data are standardised to the 2006 non-disabled population. The age distributions have not been standardised to a common year.

There are noticeable differences between the labour force participation of people with and without disabilities across all age groups. People can be out of the labour force for numerous reasons including retirement, school attendance, and family responsibilities, for example. However, not all people choose to stay out of the labour force, some people with disabilities can be completely prevented from working or are limited in the amount or type of work they can do (this group is examined more closely in a later section of this paper). The largest difference in labour force participation between people with and without limitations was in the 45 to 54 age group where nearly nine out of ten (88.9%) people without disabilities participated in the labour force compared to about six out of ten (62.7%) people with disabilities (see chart 2).

Chart 2
Labour force participation rate by age group and disability status, Canada, 2006

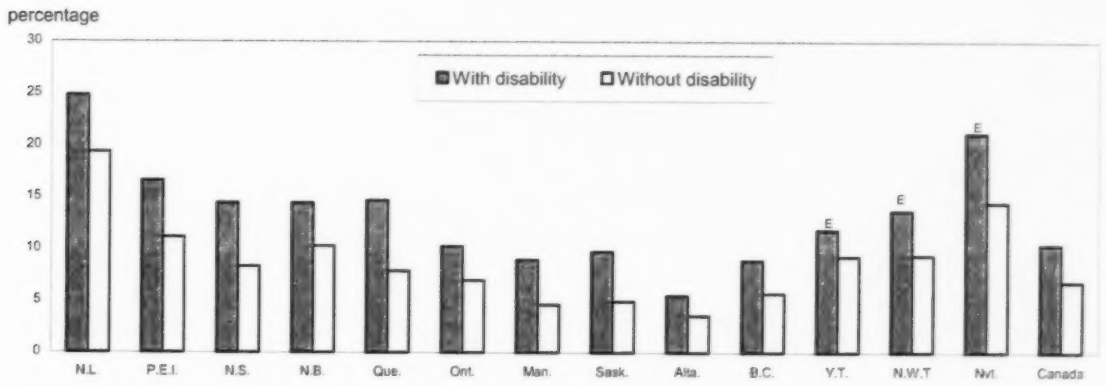


Note: Includes the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut
Source: Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006*

Unemployment was also more common for people with disabilities. Although the labour force participation rate and the unemployment rate both tend to indicate success or difficulty in the labour market, the unemployment rate is perhaps the key economic indicator for people with disabilities because not all people with disabilities were able to work. As a measure of people who were actively searching for employment and thus able to work, the unemployment rate measures labour market success for people with disabilities and can be directly compared to people without disabilities. In 2006, the unemployment rate for all people with disabilities aged 15 to 64 was 10.4%, which is higher than the non-disabled population at 6.8%.

The gap in the unemployment rates between people with and without disabilities was relatively consistent between genders and age groups yet there were some notable differences across the provinces and territories. The largest gap in unemployment was in Quebec where the unemployment rate for people with limitations was nearly double that of people without limitations (14.7% versus 7.9%). Similarly, Quebec's labour force participation rate for people with limitations (52.0%) was also below the national average (59.6%). Alberta had the smallest gap in the unemployment rate between people with and without disabilities (5.5% versus 3.5%) and the Yukon Territory were also very close (11.8[E]% verssus 9.2%; see chart 3). Labour force participation in Alberta (70.8%) and the Yukon Territory (75.4%) was also above the national average.

Chart 3
Unemployment rate by province, territory and disability status, Canada, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006*

The severity of a disability can also affect a person's experience in the labour market. For example, the unemployment rates for people with mild (8.3%) or moderate (9.1%) limitations were much closer to their non-disabled counterparts (6.8%) while the unemployment rate for people with severe or very severe disabilities was higher (15.2%).

The type of disability also impacted outcomes in the labour force. People with hearing limitations reported the lowest unemployment rate (10.4%) and highest labour force participation of all the types of disability (64.1%). At the other end of the scale the highest unemployment rates were observed for people with memory (15.7%) and psychological limitations (14.3%) while the lowest labour force participation rate was found for people with developmental disabilities (32.7%; see table 1). However, it should be noted that many people with disabilities have more than one type of disability so there is overlap between the categories. Please see text box 4 for a description of each type of disability.

Table 1
Labour force participation and unemployment rates by disability type, Canada, 2006

Disability type	Labour force participation	Unemployment rate
	percentage	
Hearing	64.1	10.4
Seeing	49.9	12.9
Communication	37.6	13.6
Mobility	53.6	12.1
Agility	52.8	11.7
Pain	60.0	11.1
Learning	47.6	11.8
Memory	40.2	15.7
Developmental	32.7	12.6 [E]
Psychological	45.2	14.3

Note: Includes Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. All rates on this table are age standardised
Source: Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006*

Text box 4: types of disabilities among adults

The questions in PALS enabled us to identify the following types of disabilities in adults (15 years of age or older):

Hearing: Difficulty hearing what is being said in a conversation with one other person, in a conversation with three or more persons, or in a telephone conversation.

Seeing: Difficulty seeing ordinary newsprint or clearly seeing someone's face from 4 meters away (12 feet).

Speech: Difficulty speaking and / or being understood.

Mobility: Difficulty walking half a kilometre or up and down a flight of stairs, about 12 steps without resting, moving from one room to another, carrying an object of 5 kg (10 pounds) for 10 metres (30 feet) or standing for long periods.

Agility: Difficulty bending, dressing and undressing oneself, getting into or out of bed, cutting own toenails, using fingers to grasp or handling objects, reaching in any direction (for example, above one's head) or cutting own food.

Pain: Limited in the amount or kind of activities that one can do because of a long-term pain that is constant or reoccurs from time to time (for example, recurrent back pain).

Learning: Difficulty learning because of a condition, such as attention problems, hyperactivity or dyslexia, whether or not the condition was diagnosed by a teacher, doctor or other health professional.

Memory: Limited in the amount or kind of activities that one can do due to frequent periods of confusion or difficulty remembering things. These difficulties may be associated with Alzheimer's disease, brain injuries or other similar conditions.

Developmental disabilities: Cognitive limitations due to an intellectual disability or developmental disorder such as Down's syndrome, autism or an intellectual disability caused by a lack of oxygen at birth.

Text box 4: types of disabilities among adults (concluded)

Psychological: Limited in the amount or kind of activities that one can do due to the presence of an emotional, psychological or psychiatric condition, such as phobias, depression, schizophrenia, drinking or drug problems.

Other[1]**:** The type of disability is 'other' if the respondent answered YES to the general questions on activity limitations, but did not provide any YES to the questions about type of disability that followed.

1. In 2006 the disability type 'unknown' was renamed 'other'.

Changes in the labour market between 2001 and 2006 for people with and without disabilities

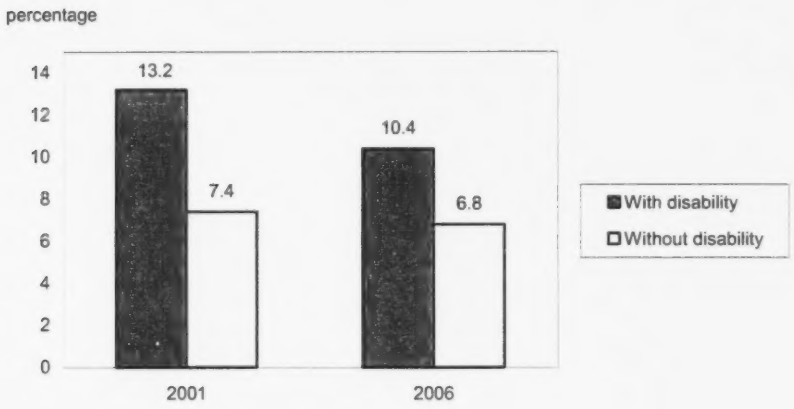
Examining the labour market performance of people with limitations over time sheds light on their progress toward full inclusion in the labour force[1]. According to the 2006 Census and the Labour Force Survey, the Canadian economy grew between 2001 and 2006, generating hundreds of thousands of jobs and leading to near record lows for unemployment. Evidence of this strong labour market is apparent in many of the leading labour market indicators including the unemployment rate and growth in total employment.

The unemployment rate

Evidence of Canada's strong economy was obvious in the unemployment rate as it fell in nearly all parts of Canada between 2001 and 2006 (see 97-559-XIE 2006001). The unemployment rate for people with disabilities also demonstrated this strong economic growth, decreasing from 13.2% to 10.4%. While people with activity limitations experienced a higher unemployment rate in 2006 than the non-disabled population (10.4% versus 6.8%), the gap narrowed between the two groups considerably. In 2001, the unemployment rate for people with activity limitations was nearly double that of the population without disabilities at 13.2% compared to 7.4%. By 2006, a decrease in the unemployment rate for people with disabilities and a smaller decline for people without disabilities narrowed the gap in the unemployment rates by roughly one third (see chart 4). As the following section on employment will show, nearly all of these gains appear to result from growth in employment for people with disabilities rather than people leaving the labour force.

1. Some technical changes were made to the PALS between 2001 and 2006, such as including the territories. To allow time series comparisons with 2001 PALS, people who would not have been included in the 2001 PALS have been excluded from the 2006 PALS data in the 2001 and 2006 comparisons (see 89-628 XIE no. 1 for more details).

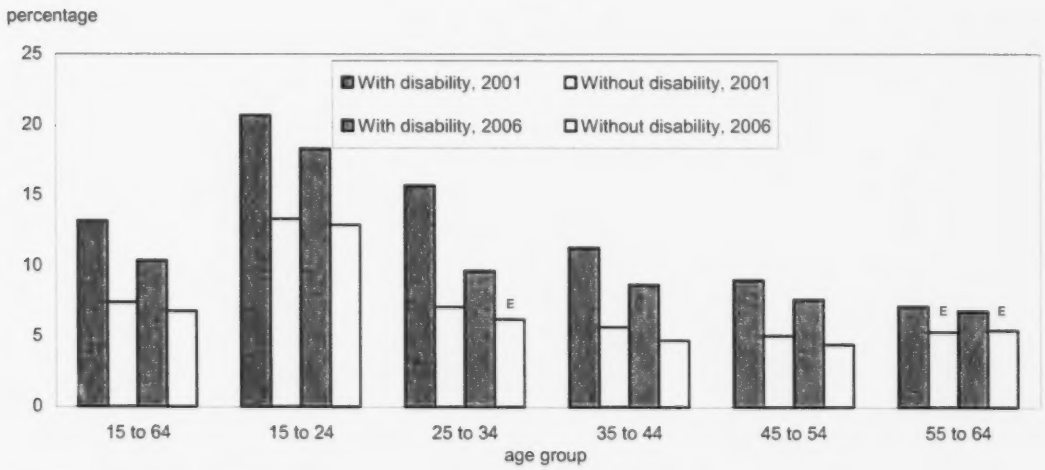
Chart 4
Unemployment rate of people with and without disabilities in Canada, 2001 and 2006



Note: Excludes Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut
Source: Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2001 and 2006*

Men and women with activity limitations benefited from the strong economy as both their unemployment rates fell similarly. Some of the largest declines in the unemployment rate for people with disabilities were noted in the 25 to 34 age group where the unemployment rate decreased from 15.7% in 2001 to 9.6[E]% in 2006. This decline is larger than the population without disabilities where the unemployment rate for this group decreased to 6.2% in 2006, down from 7.1% in 2001 (see chart 5).

Chart 5
Unemployment rates for people with and without disabilities, by age group, Canada, 2001 and 2006



Note: Excludes Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut
Source: Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2001 and 2006*

The severity of a disability often has an effect on the labour market experiences of people with disabilities. Between 2001 and 2006, there was a decrease in the unemployment rates for people with moderate disabilities as their unemployment rate decreased from 13.1% in 2001 to 9.1%in 2006. People with mild, severe or very severe limitations reported minimal changes in their unemployment rates.

There are ten different types of disability identified by the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) and each may present a different challenge in the labour force. Nevertheless, persons with all types of disabilities experienced a larger decrease in their unemployment rates than did the non-disabled population. In 2001 the highest unemployment rates were found for people with memory (23.3%), psychological (20.5%) and learning (20.1%) limitations but this profile changed somewhat as a result of a large decrease in the unemployment rate for people with learning limitations. By 2006, the highest unemployment rates were reported for people with memory (15.4%), psychological (14.3%) and communication limitations (13.7%; see table 2).

Table 2
Unemployment rates for people with disabilities by disability type in Canada, 2001 and 2006

Disability type	Unemployment rate	
	2001	2006
	percentage	
Hearing	13.3	10.4
Seeing	19.1	13.0
Communication	18.2	13.7
Mobility	14.1	12.0
Agility	13.5	11.7
Pain	12.8	11.1
Learning	20.1	11.7
Memory	23.3	15.4
Developmental	18.9 [E]	12.7 [E]
Psychological	20.5	14.3

Note: Excludes Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. All rates on this table are age standardised
Source: Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2001 and 2006*

Total employment

An analysis of total employment provides a measure of the job growth for people with disabilities though the employment rate does not reflect the situation for people who were completely prevented from working. Canada's growth in total employment between 2001 and 2006 was the strongest of the G7 group of countries with an average annual growth rate of 1.7% (see 97-559-XIE 2006001). The employment rate also increased for people with and without disabilities. People with disabilities recorded the largest increase in their employment rate, rising from 49.3% in 2001 to 53.5% in 2006. By comparison, the employment rate for people without disabilities increased from 73.8% in 2001 to 75.1% in 2006. In terms of absolute numbers over those five years, 339,590 more people with disabilities were working by 2006 compared to 874,960 more people without disabilities (see table 3).

Table 3
Growth in total employment, Canada, 2001 and 2006

Employment growth	2001 Total employment	2006 Total employment	Employment growth 2001 to 2006
		number	
With disabilities	911,130	1,250,720	339,590
Without disabilities	13,194,820	14,069,780	874,970

Note: Excludes Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut
Source: Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2001 and 2006*

There was employment growth across all age groups. The most growth occurred in the 55 to 64 and 45 to 54 age groups for people with and without activity limitations as the baby boomers shifted into the older age groups and there is a growing tendency for older workers to participate in the labour force. Nevertheless, people with disabilities experienced more growth in all age groups, particularly the 55 to 64 age group and the 45 to 54 age group (see table 4). This growth in employment for people with disabilities occurred at more than double their population growth rate.

Notable gender differences in the growth of total employment were also evident. Women with disabilities experienced more growth in employment than their male counterparts between 2001 and 2006. This larger growth for women aged 15 to 64 equated to 188,790 more women with disabilities being employed after the five years, the bulk of whom were 45 or older. In fact, the growth for women during this time period resulted in more women with disabilities being employed than their male counterparts (692,110 versus 676,770; see table 4).

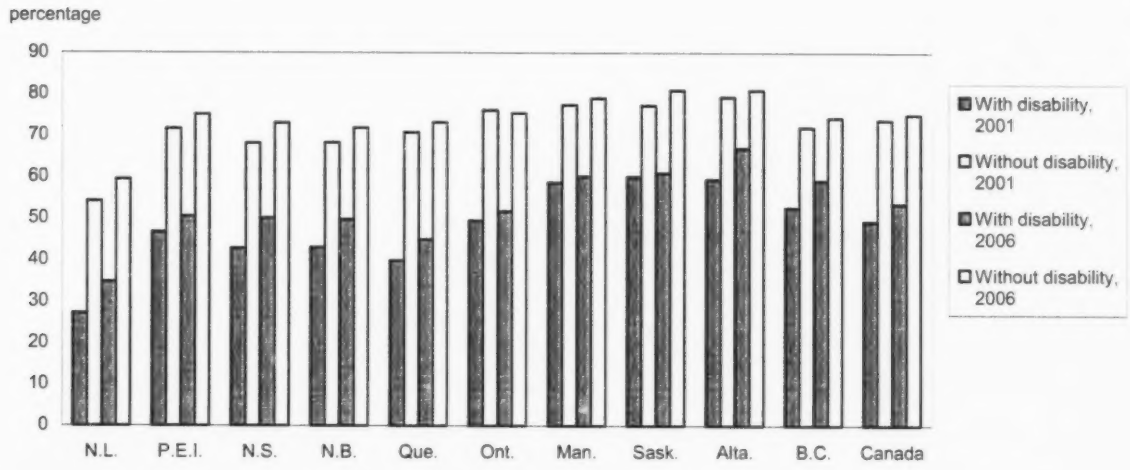
Table 4
Total employment for people with and without disabilities, by sex and age group, Canada, 2001 and 2006

Sex and age group	Total employment			
	People with disabilities		People without disabilities	
	2001	2006	2001	2006
	number			
Male				
15 to 24	29,150	38,890	1,073,920	1,165,070
25 to 34	51,600	68,870	1,557,120	1,576,720
35 to 44	113,690	144,320	1,989,380	1,876,430
45 to 54	155,970	201,360	1,636,620	1,836,770
55 to 64	113,910	163,720	727,290	985,210
Total	**464,320**	**617,160**	**6,984,320**	**7,440,200**
Female				
15 to 24	33,070	44,280	1,038,930	1,107,280
25 to 34	60,150	74,620	1,394,180	1,407,110
35 to 44	123,560	139,010	1,802,910	1,716,520
45 to 54	152,840	223,840	1,467,790	1,671,080
55 to 64	77,200	151,800	506,690	727,590
Total	**446,800**	**633,560**	**6,210,500**	**6,629,590**
Total - both sexes				
15 to 24	62,220	83,170	2,112,850	2,272,350
25 to 34	111,750	143,490	2,951,300	2,983,830
35 to 44	237,250	283,330	3,792,280	3,592,960
45 to 54	308,800	425,210	3,104,410	3,507,850
55 to 64	191,100	315,520	1,233,970	1,712,800
Total	**911,130**	**1,250,720**	**13,194,820**	**14,069,780**

Note: Excludes Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut
Source: Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2001 and 2006*

Total employment increased at varying levels across the provinces and there were notable differences for people with and without disabilities. The largest increases in the employment rate occurred in Newfoundland Labrador and Alberta. The employment rate for people with limitations in Newfoundland Labrador increased from 27.1% in 2001 to 34.8% in 2006. At the same time, the 2006 employment rate for people with disabilities in Alberta was 67.1%, up from 59.5% in 2001 (see chart 6).

Chart 6
Employment rates for people with and without disabilities by province, Canada, 2001 and 2006

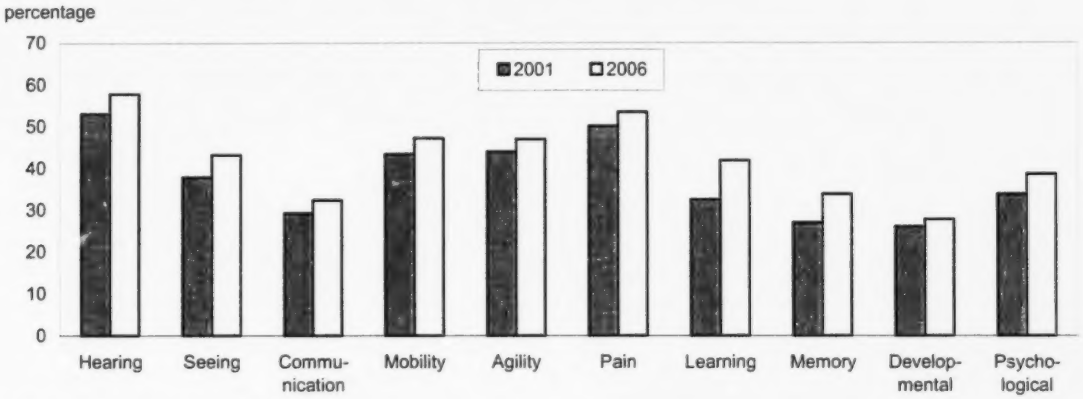


Note: Excludes Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut
Source: Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2001 and 2006*

People with severe or very severe disabilities experienced solid growth in total employment between 2001 and 2006. The employment rate for people with severe or very severe disabilities increased from 31.8% in 2001 to 38.3% in 2006. By contrast, while people with moderate disabilities reported a decrease in unemployment, their growth in total employment was comparatively lower with the employment rate increasing to 56.6% in 2006, up from 54.0% in 2001. In terms of sheer numbers, people with mild disabilities experienced the largest increase in total employment at 141,900 jobs.

The growing availability of technology and falling price of computer software and other related assistive technology may have improved the employment opportunities for some types of disability more than others between 2001 and 2006. People with learning limitations experienced the largest increase in their employment rate, increasing from 32.5% in 2001 up to 41.8% in 2006. At the other end of the spectrum, the employment rate for people with developmental disabilities remained virtually unchanged (see chart 7).

Chart 7
Employment rates by disability type, Canada, 2001 and 2006



Note: Excludes Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut
Source: Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2001 and 2006*

Barriers to labour force participation

Barriers to labour force participation can take many forms. While a disability alone may be a barrier to participating in the labour market, there are additional barriers that can further complicate efforts to find employment. The final section of this report examines three potential barriers to labour force participation, specifically: being prevented by the limitation itself, requirements for workplace accommodations and perceived discrimination in the workplace.

To better understand the situations of people who were not in the labour force and report being partially or completely prevented from working, the 2006 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) further separates people who were retired from the 'not in labour force group' (the remainder of this report uses the PALS labour force status variable and discusses people with disabilities only). To be considered retired, people had to be permanently retired from a job or business. People who remained in the not in labour force category had not retired from a job or business and were not looking for work.

Ability to participate in the labour force

A major barrier to labour force participation for some people with a disability can be their limitation or condition itself. The specific situation of a person with a disability may have completely prevented them from working or limit the amount or kind of work they were able to do. Exploring the population that was completely prevented or limited in their ability to work provides insight into the gaps in labour force participation between people with and without disabilities and the scope of people who would not be able to work regardless of how supportive their work environment could be made.

Completely prevented from participating

In 2006, 63.6% of Canadians aged 15 to 64 with an activity limitation who were not in the labour force (nearly 420,000 people) reported that they were completely prevented from working, as did 63.5% of retired Canadians under the age of 65, or about 115,000 people.

The incidence of being completely prevented from working is lowest in the territories

The proportion of people who were not in the labour force and reported being completely prevented from working was about 14 percentage points lower in the territories than in Canada as a whole (49.5% versus 63.6%). At the same time, all of the provinces were remarkably similar in terms of people being completely prevented from working.

The severity of a limitation also has a major impact on a person's ability to participate in the labour force. Regardless of whether the people were retired or not in the labour force, higher levels of severity meant a higher likelihood that people would be completely prevented from working. In fact, more than 3 out of 10 people with a mild disability who were not in the labour force indicated that they were completely prevented from working, compared to more than 7 out of 10 people with a severe or very severe disability. The pattern was also true for retired people where almost 3 out of 10 people with a mild disability said they were completely prevented from working, compared to nearly 9 out of 10 people with a severe or very severe disability.

Limited in the amount or kind of work

In contrast to people who were completely prevented from working, the 2006 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) also explored whether people felt that their condition limited the amount or kind of work they could do as opposed to completely preventing work.

In 2006, more than 700,000 Canadians aged 15 to 64 with an activity limitation reported that their condition limited the amount or kind of work they could do. Within that group, more than 4 out of 10 people who were employed reported that they were limited, compared with 6 out of 10 people who were unemployed, not in the labour force or retired.

Similar to being completely prevented from working, severity also played an important role in being limited at work. The more severe the disability, the more likely employed people were to say they were limited in their ability to work. Within the employed group, being limited at work was more than twice as likely to be reported for people with severe (73.5%) or very severe disabilities (81.3%) compared to people with mild disabilities (27.0%; see table 5).

Table 5
People who reported being limited at work by severity and labour force status, Canada, 2006

Employment status	Severity of disability			
	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Very severe
	percentage			
Employed	27.0	50.5	73.5	81.3
Unemployed	38.8	74.2	87.5	90.9
Not in labour force	40.4	71.6	68.3	87.2
Retired	58.3	73.1	88.5	F

Note: Includes Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut
Source: Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006*

Workplace accommodations

Workplace accommodations are modifications to the job or work environment that can enable a person with an activity limitation to participate fully in the work environment. These modifications can include many things ranging from modified hours or duties and software or hardware modifications to structural items such as handrails or accessible washrooms. There are some major differences between the workplace modification requirements of people with disabilities who were employed versus those who were unemployed or not in the labour force. People who were unemployed or not in labour force tended to report much higher needs for workplace accommodations, which may have played a role in being unemployed or not in the labour force.

Workplace accommodations for employed people with activity limitations

The most common workplace accommodation required for employed people with activity limitations was modified hours or days or reduced work hours, which was reported by about one in five (20.1%) people in this group. Approximately one in six people required a special chair or back support (16.5%) or a job redesign (14.2%) while about one in ten required a modified or ergonomic workstation (10.7%).

Consistent with previous sections, the severity of the disability also played a role in the type of workplace accommodations that were needed. For each type of modification, except for 'other' equipment, help, or work arrangements, people with a severe or very severe disability were more likely to need each of the modifications (see table 6).

Table 6
Types of modifications required to be able to work by severity, Canada, 2006

Type of workplace accommodation	Mild or moderate	Severe or very severe
	percentage	
Modified hours or days	14.0	41.1
Special chair or back support	12.4	30.3
Job redesign	9.6	30.3
Modified or ergonomic workstation	8.8	17.1
Other equipment, help, or work arrangement	3.2 [E]	5.1 [E]
Accessible elevator	2.0 [E]	6.9 [E]
Appropriate parking	2.0 [E]	10.3
Accessible washrooms	1.9 [E]	9.7
Accessible transportation	1.6 [E]	6.4 [E]
Human support	1.6 [E]	6.6 [E]
Technical aids	1.0 [E]	3.5 [E]
Computer modifications	0.6 [E]	5.2 [E]
Handrails or ramps	0.5 [E]	7.3 [E]
Communication aids	0.3 [E]	F

Note: Includes Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut
Source: Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006*

There were also some differences in the requirements for workplace accommodations across the age groups. The 15 to 24 age group reported lower needs for job redesigns (7.8%), modified hours or days or reduced work hours (13.4%) and special chairs or back supports (5.8%). This age group was also more likely to report not requiring any modifications (73.3%) compared to all the other age groups combined (57.8%).

Employed people with a hearing limitation were less likely than people with other limitations to require modifications in order to work as 68.2% specified not needing any modifications. A job redesign was more likely to be needed by people with psychological (26.3%) or developmental (32.0%[E]) limitations while modified hours or work days were more common for people with memory (43.4%) or psychological limitations (40.6%). Human support (for example a Sign language interpreter or personal assistant) was most common for people with communication (9.3%[E]) or developmental disabilities (13.7%[E]) and special chairs or back support were most likely to be required by people with mobility (25.0%) or agility (25.6%) limitations. Workers with a developmental disability were more likely to require accessible transportation (10.1%[E]).

Has the accommodation been provided?

In addition to analysing the need for a workplace accommodation it is also important to examine whether or not the workplace accommodation has been provided. The rates of satisfying each of the accommodation needs of workers with disabilities were similar yet there were pronounced regional differences. The highest rates for job redesigns being accommodated were found in Nova Scotia (82.5%) and Alberta (81.3%) where they were higher than the national average (64.7%).

Severity also played a role in the provision of workplace accommodations but in an opposite manner than previous analyses where people with more severe disabilities were having more difficulties. In fact, people with severe or very severe disabilities were more likely to have received a job redesign (55.4%) compared to people with mild or moderate disabilities (73.3%).

Between 2001 and 2006, there was a decline in the provision of some workplace accommodations by employers, namely job redesigns and human support such as a reader, sign language interpreter, job coach or personal assistant. According to the 2006 survey results, 64.8% of workers who felt they required a job redesign had received one, down from 79.7% in 2001 while the provision of human support declined from 83.2% in 2001 to 55.5% in 2006.

Workplace accommodations for people who were unemployed or not in the labour force

As mentioned in the previous sections, people with activity limitations who were unemployed or not in the labour force had a very different labour force experience than employed people with activity limitations. People that were unemployed or not in the labour force tended to have more severe limitations which also led to increased requirements for workplace accommodations in order for them to be able to work. These increased workplace accommodation needs may have also contributed to their labour force difficulties.

For women, the most common workplace accommodations were modified hours or days (29.7%), job redesign (24.2%), and special chairs or back support (21.5%). Modified hours or days were also the most common accommodation for men (28.2%) but it was tied with a job redesign (28.2%; see table 7).

Table 7
Workplace accommodations for people who were unemployed or not in the labour force by sex, Canada, 2006

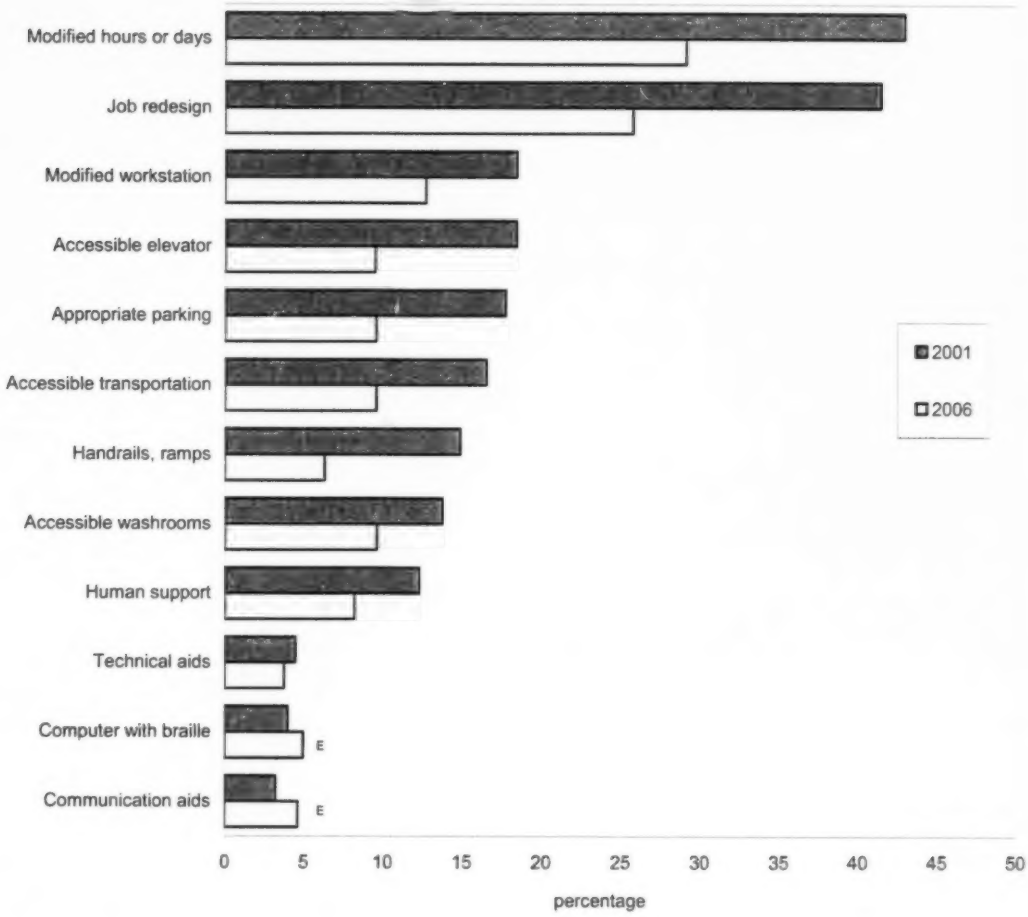
Workplace accommodation	Women	Men
	percentage	
Modified hours or days	29.7	28.2
Job redesign	24.2	28.2
Special chair or back support	21.5	15.3
Modified or ergonomic workstation	14.0	10.9
Accessible elevator	12.4	6.5 [E]
Accessible washrooms	11.5	7.1 [E]
Appropriate parking	11.0	8.2 [E]
Accessible transportation	9.6	9.5
Human support	7.3	9.3
Handrails, ramps	6.6	6.5 [E]
Other equipment, help, or work arrangement	5.7 [E]	4.1 [E]
Computer with braille	5.7 [E]	4.0 [E]
Communication aids	4.6 [E]	4.6 [E]
Technical aids	3.4 [E]	4.2 [E]

Note: Includes Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut
Source: Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006*

Workplace accommodation needs decreased

For the most part, people who were unemployed or not in the labour force reported fewer workplace accommodation needs in 2006 compared to 2001. Requirements for modified hours, job redesigns, modified workstations, accessible elevators, appropriate parking, accessible transportation, handrails or ramps, accessible washrooms, or human support all decreased from 2001 to 2006. For example, between 2001 and 2006, the percentage of people that required a job redesign decreased from 189,490 (41.5%) in 2001 to 114,890 (25.8%) in 2006 for people who were unemployed or not in the labour force (see chart 8). It should be noted that this change represents a decrease in people needing these accommodations to be able to work, not an increase in the provision of these modifications by employers.

Chart 8
Workplace accommodation needs to be able to work in Canada, 2001 and 2006



Note: Excludes Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut
Source: Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2001 and 2006*

Perceived discrimination

The final barrier to employment that is explored by this paper is perceived discrimination. Perceived discrimination against people with activity limitations, through discouragement or even exclusion, can be a difficult obstacle for people with disabilities.

People who were already employed were the least likely to report discrimination followed by those who were not in the labour force and then the unemployed. For example, in 2006, 25.5% of unemployed persons and 12.7% of people who were not in the labour force believed that in the past five years, they had been refused a job because of their disability compared to 7.6% of employed persons (see table 8).

Table 8
Type of perceived discrimination amongst people with disability that have worked or retired in the past five years, by labour force activity, Canada, 2006

Type of discrimination by labour force status	Labour force activity			
	Employed	Unemployed	Not in the labour force	Retired
Discriminatory questions: "Do you believe that because of your condition you have been..."		percentage		
Refused a job interview	5.5	18.3	7.7	3.3 [E]
Refused a job	7.6	25.5	12.7	6.8 [E]
Refused a job promotion	5.5	11.2 [E]	6.1	4.1 [E]
Given less responsibility...	6.3	9.7 [E]	7.9	4.6 [E]
Denied a workplace accomodation	3.1	7.6 [E]	5.9	3.6 [E]
Paid less than other workers in similar jobs	5.2	6.3 [E]	5.3 [E]	4.4 [E]
Denied other work-related benefits	1.9 [E]	5.0 [E]	4.7 [E]	3.2 [E]
Exposed to some other kind of discrimination	7.4	14.8 [E]	10.5	5.1 [E]
Discriminatory questions: "... in terms of employment..."				
Do you consider yourself to be disadvantaged...	24.7	46.3	58.0	47.8
Do you believe that your employer or potential employer would likely to consider you disadvantaged...	30.4	41.1	54.1	49.9

Note: Discriminatory questions excluded proxy respondents.
Source: Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006*

The likelihood of reporting perceived discrimination also increased with the severity of activity limitations. For example, one in fifty (2.2%) people with a mild disability and one in twenty (5.0%) people with a moderate disability reported they had been refused a promotion; the likelihood of reporting perceived discrimination increases to about one in ten (11.2%) for people with a severe or very severe activity limitation.

Age can also be an important factor in the reporting of perceived discrimination. In general, the survey results suggest that this was the case for a number of dimensions of perceived discrimination. People with a disability in the 15 to 24 and 25 to 44 age groups were more likely to report that they were refused an interview (10.4% and 8.0%), a job (14.4% and 11.7%) or were given less responsibility (11.2% and 8.3%) than people in the 45 to 64 age group.

People with activity limitations were least likely to believe they will be regarded by an employer as disadvantaged in the territories as a whole (25.8%), Prince Edward Island (30.2%), which were all below the national average (37.9%). Another notable exception was found in Nova Scotia where the province's rates for being refused a job (6.4%) or being exposed to some other form of discrimination (4.7%) were below the national rates (9.5% and 8.1% respectively).